Fumetsu no Hana

"Eternal Flower"

Scanned by Kalendel
Translated by Aki
Edited by Glassy

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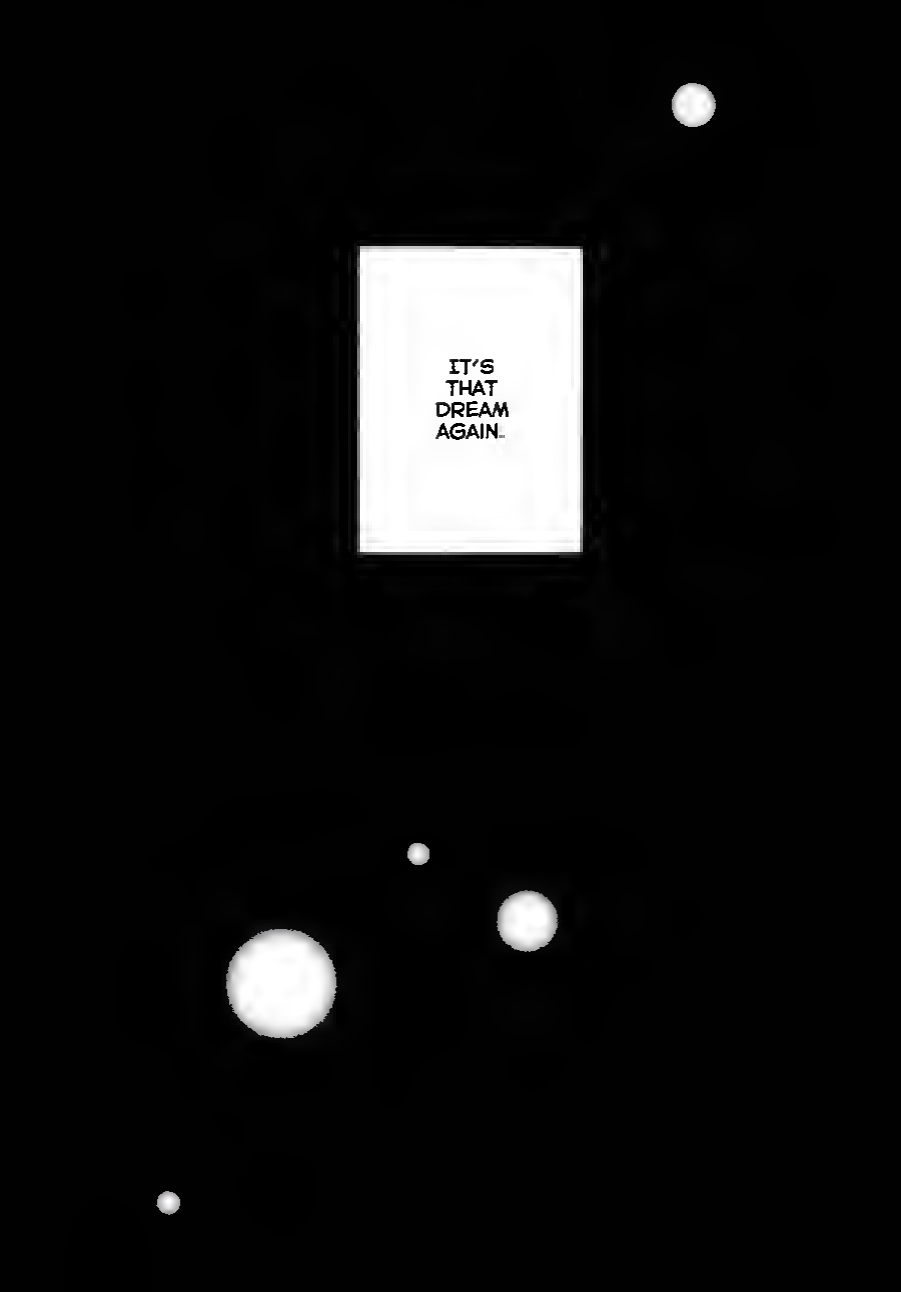
For Those Nights You Can't Sleep


IT'S
THAT
DREAM
AGAIN.

HIROTO—
.....

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM.
..thunk
thu-thunk

Clatter...
YOU DROPPED IT.
AH,
THANK YOU.

DARN, IT'S OUT OF BATTERIES
...THAT LOOKS LIKE MOURNING ATTIRE
IS IT STILL NOTICEABLE WITHOUT A TIE?
I'M ACTUALLY HEADED TO MY MOTHER'S NOW.
OH MY... I'M VERY SORRY TO HEAR THAT...
—IT'S ALREADY BEEN HALF A CENTURY
THERE ARE SEPARATIONS YOU CAN'T FORGET EVEN AS TIME PASSES.
NO...
Tha-Thunk
IT'S THE 7TH ANNIVERSARY, SO IT'S NOT SO BAD NOW.
...Thunk

BUT I REMEMBER IT AS IF WERE YESTERDAY.
THAT TIME, I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
LET GO OF THAT HAND—
—UM,
ARE YOU ON VACATION?
WITH YOUR GRANDCHILD, PERHAPS?
NO.
A PROMISE
YES,
OR A RENDEZ-VOUS?

EVEN I'M NOT SURE OF THE PERSON.
tha-thunk thunk

thud
IS SHE PICKING SOMEONE UP?
OR MAYBE SHE'S WAITING TO BE PICKED UP...
Smile

.....
no
DASH
tum
MS. YUKARI?
SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING
GET IN.

.....
When'd you get your license?
WHEN YOU WENT TO UNIVERSITY IN TOKYO,
AND HAD THAT BIG FUSS ABOUT MARRYING A GIRL YOU MET THERE, OR SOMETHING.
VROOM
Slam
!!
SCREECH
—BUT I GRADUATED IN FOUR YEARS.
DON'T REMIND ME OF IT.
THAT'S RIGHT.
I NEVER ASKED WHERE YOU'RE WORKING AT NOW.
YOUR MOTHER, SISTER AND ALL THE WOMEN OF THE FAMILY ARE LICKING THEIR LIPS WAITING FOR YOU.
Licking their lips?

I'M A WRITER— I GUESS
MY SENIOR WORKED AT A PRODUCTION AGENCY, AND I WROTE FOR THEM DURING MY SPARE TIME
SCREECH
AND I ENDED UP GETTING DRAGGED INTO THAT BUSINESS.
DRAGGED... HUH
SINCE I WAS A KID,
I HAD TROUBLE WITH HER, MY COUSIN TWO YEARS OLDER THAN ME.
FOR FIVE YEARS...
YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR NEW YEARS, OR BON*.
I THOUGHT THAT...

*T/N Japanese festivities in the middle of August commemorating deceased relatives.

YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO COME BACK.
SHE HAS A COLD STARE...
THAT PIERCES THROUGH YOUR HEART.
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING!
YOU WOULDN'T!

AFTER THAT...
I HAVEN'T TALKED TO HER SINCE.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU WOULDN'T—!
Oh HIROTO. YOU'VE GOTTEN TALLER!

MEN ARE SO USELESS AT TIMES LIKE THIS.
HE'S ON A BUSINESS TRIP.
YOU TOO, HIROTO. IT'S YOUR OWN MOTHER'S ANNIVERSARY AND YOU'RE LATE!
I guess I'll go greet my aunt, then.
CROWD
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
CROWD
DID YOU GRADUATE ALREADY?
CROWD
WHERE ARE YOU WORKING NOW?
CROWD
ARE YOU GOING OUT WITH ANYONE?
Oh? I DON'T SEE THE HUSBAND OF THIS HOUSE.
—HE'S MS. AI'S SON, RIGHT?
NO, THAT'S THE DECEASED YOUNGER SISTER'S SON
MS. AI HAS TWO DAUGHTERS
IS THAT SO? I THOUGHT SHE HAD A SON

I ASKED YUKARI TO DRIVE INSTEAD OF MY HUSBAND
AND I WAS WORRIED YOU TWO WOULD BE STUCK IN A GUTTER.
LONG TIME NO SEE, HIROTO!
HER YOUNGER SISTER— MS. AKANE, SHE WAS VERY FRAGILE. SHE RAN OFF DURING HER TEENS WITH SOME MAN AND HIS CHILD,
BUT THE MAN ENDED UP LEAVING THE KID WITH HER.
OH HIROTO, I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, AUNTIE.
YOU TOO, MIDORI.
I haven't changed since high school
I HAVEN'T.
YOU'VE GROWN SO MUCH—
Relatives you haven't seen in a while always start with this
AND IT'S HARD TO JUST CASUALLY STOP BY.
MY MOTHER AND I ARE INDEBTED TO YOU,
YOU'RE ALWAYS SO BUSY; IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU TAKE A LONG BREAK
YOU'LL STAY HERE FOR A WHILE, RIGHT?

I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN YOU CAME TO MY HOUSE, HIROTO.
OH, DON'T BE LIKE THAT.
PLUS, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A SON.
WE'RE NOT STRANGERS.
MY MOTHER STAYED AT THE HOSPITAL,
AND I LIVED WITH MY AUNT EVER SINCE I COULD REMEMBER.
I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING BEFORE THAT. —IN THIS HOUSE...
I LIVED WITH NO RESTRIC-TIONS.
Crack

NO TROUBLE AT ALL.
YOU WERE SUCH A SMART AND WELL-MANNERED BOY, HIROTO.
YOU'VE GROWN UP SO MUCH— AKANE WOULD BE PROUD.

CLANG
BUT DIDN'T HE ANNUL A MARRIAGE DURING HIS COLLEGE DAYS?
I GUESS THEY'RE THE SAME AFTER ALL.
THE MOTHER, OR THE FATHER?
THAT GIRL IS... STRANGE
SHE DECIDED TO PURSUE CONSTRUCTION OR SOMETHING, EVEN THOUGH SHE'S A GIRL
—SHE'S STILL A STUDENT RIGHT?
SHE'S NOT FRIENDLY AT THE LEAST

I WONDER IF SHE PLANS ON BEING SINGLE HER WHOLE LIFE
I'LL GO RIGHT NOW
Slip
—HUH?
SIS.
MOM WANTS YOU TO HELP OUT IN THE KITCHEN

Shut
Suzuki!! Where the hell are you!!
Don't get out of contact while you have your documents!
I'M VERY SORRY, SIR.
THE MANUSCRIPT'S DONE. I LEFT IT AT MY OFFICE.
If this continues, I'm going to take you off these projects!
How exactly is an anniversary "sudden"?
IT WAS SUDDEN SO I WASN'T ABLE TO CONTACT YOU EARLIER.
I'M HERE FOR MY MOTHER'S ANNIVERSARY—

Isn't your hometown in—
— Ah!
You're really spirited, you know
.....
I FORGOT ABOUT IT TILL THIS MORNING WHEN MY GRANDMOTHER CALLED.
HUH?
Turn on the TV! Quick!
Stret——ch
AH
—was...
...found at the train platform this noon.

Although he was taken to the hospital –
He was the CEO of some large company, but stepped down from that position.
I THINK...
I'VE SEEN THIS GUY.
He's the key person to that crime!
He said he was in recovery and refused to come to court.
Why would a man like that be at an old train platform?

HOW DO I EVEN...
CONDUCT INTERVIEWS -?
Beep
Beep
Beep
Beep
Beep
Go interview and find something good,
and I'll let you off of this case.
EH?
Hey, your home is close to that station, right?
WHAAAT!?
Bye
And about your finished manuscript, I'll just ask the owner to open your room for me
HIROTO
COME HERE.

AKANE—
YOUR MOTHER DIDN'T LEAVE MUCH OF AN INHERITANCE
SINCE THE FAMILY CUT TIES WITH HER— THERE AREN'T ANY PICTURES OF HER DURING CHILDHOOD
I THOUGHT EVERYTHING ABOUT HER WAS THROWN AWAY—
I WAS WAITING UNTIL YOU WERE OLDER TO HAND THESE TO YOU
WELL, IT'S FINE IF YOU WANT ME TO HOLD ONTO THESE,
SINCE YOU DON'T COME BACK AT ALL

THERE WERE THINGS I WANTED TO HOLD ONTO AS WELL—
HUH
—I KNEW IT.
THERE'S ACTUALLY A PICTURE OF HER SMILING
THERE WOULDN'T BE PICTURES OF THAT MAN.
Suzuki
flip

.....
RIP
...!
toss
BUT...
STUPID MOTHER—
LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON—
MY POOR MOTHER WHO WAS THROWN AWAY!
A HORRIBLE FATHER WHO TURNED DOWN HIS SICK WIFE...
AND HIS OWN SON.

THE HELL IS THAT?
SURELY SOMEDAY...
HE'LL BECOME THE SAME AS HIS FATHER
HIS CURRENT ADDRESS, AND THE HOSPITAL HE WAS AT
I GOT A CALL FROM HIS CURRENT WIFE,
AND HE'S IN GRAVE DANGER
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!
SLAP
—I KNEW MOM WOULD HIDE THIS FROM YOU

I'LL NEVER FORGIVE IT.
YOU WOULDN'T KNOW!
I'VE FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT MAN!
IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME IF HE'S DEAD OR ALIVE!
YOU DON'T KNOW ANY-THING!
WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU SAY THAT?
THAT MAN...
...THE HEARTLESS SYMPATHY...
I'LL NEVER FORGIVE THEM!
YOU WOULDN'T—!
...DADDY...

BE A GOOD BOY, HIROTO.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING—
DADDY.
SOMEDAY I WILL COME TO PICK YOU UP,
DEFINITELY.
I PROMISE.

DADDY—!
WAIT!
tug
Gasp
!

...DREAM ABOUT THAT?

IT'S NOT RARE FOR OLDER FOLK TO PASS OUT DURING TRIPS.
BUT I GUESS PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT, JUST BECAUSE HE'S A CEO OF SOME BIG COMPANY.
NO,
I WAS JUST INTERESTED.
YOU'RE PRETTY LATE TO CATCH ON THIS NEWS
ARE YOU FROM THE POLICE? OR SOME REPORTER?
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T NOTICE.
IT LOOKED LIKE HE WAS TAKING A QUICK BREAK.
NO, HE WAS SITTING ON THE BENCH.

—IT'S BEEN OVER HALF A CENTURY...
HIS DEATH'S RECORDED AS A DISEASE.
LET GO OF THAT HAND.
THAT TIME, I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
WHAT'S THAT GUILT HE CARRIED ...
THAT KEPT HIM LIKE THAT FOR SO MANY YEARS?
HE WAS SOME CRANKY OLD MAN, THOUGH.
IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE...

I DON'T KNOW.
hUh?
HEY, I SAW YOU YESTERDAY.
...ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMEONE?
AH.
HEY, YOU-
HELLO, SIR.
MIND IF I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS?

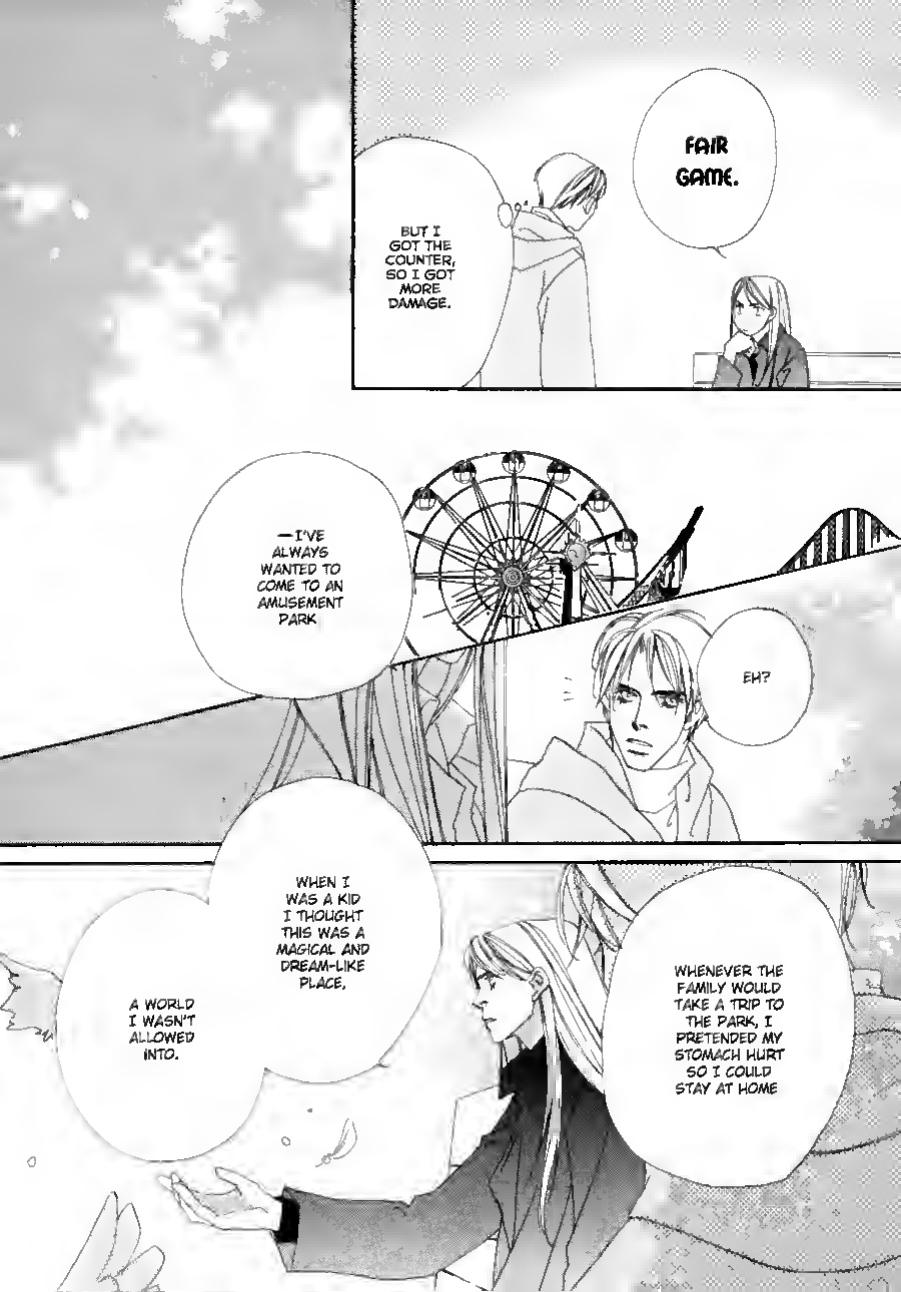
STATION
A GROWN MAN LIKE YOU WALKING AROUND IN BROAD DAYLIGHT,
AND TALKING TO A YOUNG GIRL WOULD LOOK SUSPICIOUS, NO MATTER HOW YOU SEE IT.
Today's accidents
Deaths
Wounded
THIEF
If you've seen
call 911
WHY DID MS. YUKARI HAVE TO COME PICK ME UP?
I'M VERY SORRY I'LL TELL HIM TO BE MORE CAREFUL
I'LL KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT.
I'M STILL NO GOOD WITH HER.
MOM AND MIDORI WERE OUT SHOPPING.
SO FOR YOUR SAKE,

BUT IS THAT GIRL FINE?
SHE WAS WALKING AROUND THERE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT ON A SCHOOL DAY.
YES, I'VE CONTACTED HER MOTHER SEVERAL TIMES— BUT WELL,
I'D UNDERSTAND IF SOMEONE YOU TOOK IN NEVER GOT ATTACHED TO YOU
TOOK IN?
THE OWNER OF THAT PLACE WAS GOING TO RAISE HER...
BUT THEY COULDN'T HANDLE HER— SO OFF TO FOSTER CARE SHE WENT.
IT'S JUST RECENTLY THAT SHE STARTED ROAMING AROUND THE STATION.
MAYBE...

I WILL COME TO PICK YOU UP.
SHE'S STILL WAITING FOR HER FATHER TO PICK HER UP.
SOME DAY...
Since yesterday ...
I realized you weren't great at driving.
But how did we end up at an amusement park instead of home?
WHY DON'T YOU INVITE THAT GIRL NEXT TIME?

—THEN I'LL REALLY GET ARRESTED.
SHE MIGHT FOLLOW YOU INSTEAD OF RUNNING AROUND.
NOW THAT I'M AN ADULT,
IT'S REALLY NOT THAT PRETTY HERE, AND THERE AREN'T ANY INTERESTING RIDES.
BUT KIDS ARE JUST FINE WITH THAT.

SO I'M THE KID!?
RIGHT
.....
flutter
—MS. YUKARI!
GO RIDE ON SOMETHING. I'LL PAY.
I DIDN'T LIKE HOW YOU SUCKED UP TO THE ADULTS AND PRETENDED TO BE THE PERFECT STUDENT.
ME TOO
THAT ALL-KNOWING FACE AND DECISIVE ATTITUDE OF YOURS ALWAYS GOT ON MY NERVES!
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO TELL YOU—


FAIR GAME.
BUT I GOT THE COUNTER, SO I GOT MORE DAMAGE.
—I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO COME TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK
EH?
WHEN I WAS A KID I THOUGHT THIS WAS A MAGICAL AND DREAM-LIKE PLACE,
A WORLD I WASN'T ALLOWED INTO.
WHENEVER THE FAMILY WOULD TAKE A TRIP TO THE PARK, I PRETENDED MY STOMACH HURT SO I COULD STAY AT HOME

I DON'T THINK SO ANYMORE.
—BUT IT'S QUITE NICE TO SEE IT LIKE THIS.
SINCE WE'RE HERE...
I'LL GO RIDE SOMETHING...
YOU SHOULD COME TOO.
THAT'S RIGHT.

I DID, THOUGH.
You haven't even met him, how would you know?
A man's enough of a bad guy if he bribed politicians with money and made stocks of rival companies drop!
AND I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT HE WOULD DO SUCH A THING.
THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF A HOMICIDE
THERE AREN'T ANY ABSURD RUMORS ABOUT HIM
Oh, but
it was true that he was resting because of his illness
—YUKARI.
...

Chronic heart failure.
If he had one more seizure, that would have been the end of it.
KAL
EXPLAIN THIS TO ME.
It seems like the cause of his death was a heart attack.
HE KNEW IT, TOO?
THEN WHY WOULD HE GO ON A VACATION—
IT'S A PROMISE.
EVEN I DON'T KNOW WHO IT IS.
BUT.

It's because I'm a former failed journalist
HAVE CONNECTIONS TO THE HOSPITAL?
YOU'RE PRETTY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THIS, HUH?
...I'D LIKE TO ASK FOR A CHECK-UP.
I WISH HE SAID HE WERE PART JOURNALIST, INSTEAD...
Patter patter patter
HIROTO!
A TRIP ONCE IN A WHILE ISN'T BAD.
SHE ISN'T GOING TO COME BACK..!!
IF YOU LEAVE NOW...
SIS IS GONNA LEAVE FOR SOUTH AMERICA!
THIS IS BAD!

Patter
Patter
Patter
MOM!?
Dash
EVEN A WOMAN LIKE ME CAN BE USEFUL IN OTHER PLACES.

...WHEN DID YOU DECIDE THIS?
crunch
Crunch
THE FURTHER AWAY FROM HOME, THE BETTER
SO I STUDIED SPANISH ON MY OWN.
BUT...
I DECIDED WHEN YOU CAME BACK, HIROTO.
I KNOW...
—I...
.....
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE MADE HER CRY.

...KILLED MY YOUNGER BROTHER.
!
IT'S A SECRET.
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M CERTAIN, BECAUSE NOBODY CONFIRMED IT
BEFORE MIDORI WAS BORN...
I WAS 4, AND HE WAS 2.
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A SIBLING,
A YOUNGER BROTHER.
—WE WERE PLAYING IN THE HOUSE BY OURSELVES.
WHEN MY MOM TOOK HER EYES OFF OF HIM, HE WENT TO THE BATHROOM
I PRETENDED TO PLAY WITH MY DOLLS.
I CARED FOR HIM SO MUCH.

NO ONE BLAMED ME,
AND MY MOTHER DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.
I GREW UP,
BUT THAT'S—
AN ACCIDENT!
I HEARD THE WATER RUNNING,
BUT I DIDN'T BOTHER TO CALL OVER AN ADULT.
THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED OUT.
AND THAT MY MOM WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I DID.
AND I REALIZED WHAT I'VE DONE IN THE PAST,
—DO YOU REMEMBER?

I MET YOU FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS PLACE.
YOU WERE STILL A LITTLE KID.
UNCLE...
—I...
LOOKED YOUNG, HELPLESS...
AND YET,
VERY KIND
WAS THE ONE WHO DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING
IT WAS A SECRET...
SO I COULD STAY AT THIS HOME,
AND LIVE HERE...
AS YOUR OLDER SISTER—

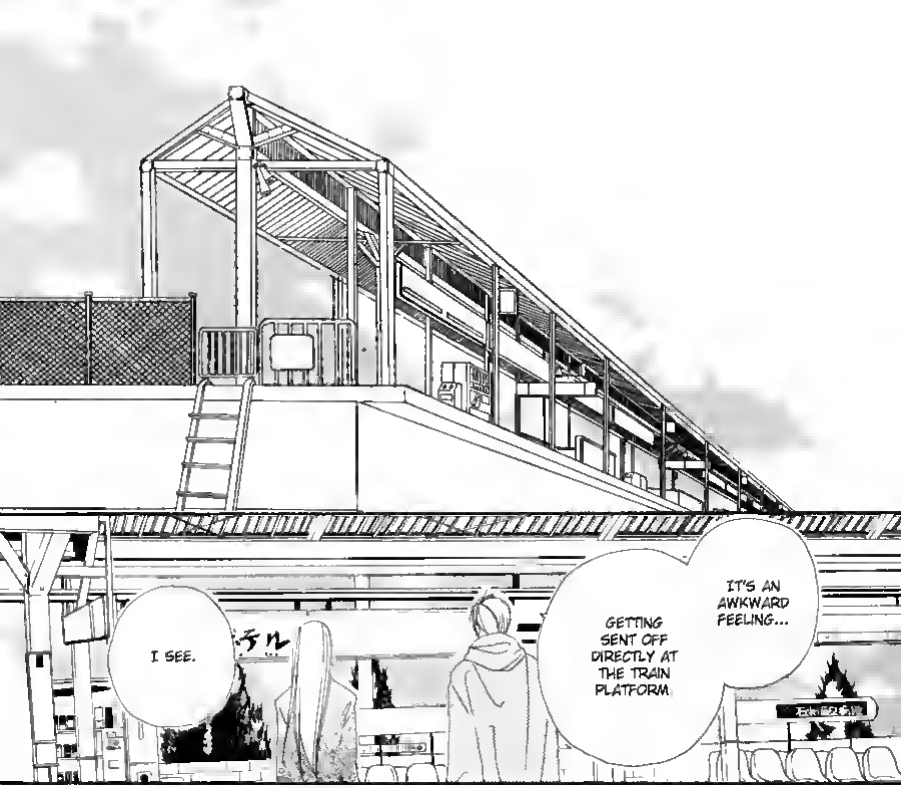
hey.
turn
wait!
—erm...
do you like amusement parks?
do you want to come with me?
hatt
I have a promise
with who?

I DON'T KNOW.
—DID HE TALK TO YOU ABOUT HIS PAST?
A LONG TIME AGO, FIRE RAINED FROM THE SKY,
AND THE TOWN WENT UP IN FLAMES.
BUT WE DIDN'T MAKE IT.
I RAN HAND IN HAND WITH MY YOUNGER SISTER.
AND IN THAT FIRE,
THAT TIME
IT TOOK A WHILE FOR HIM TO REALIZE THAT THE SMALL PARK HE SAW FROM THE HOSPITAL WINDOW...
WAS THE NURSING HOME'S BACKYARD.
HE SAID...
HE SHOULDN'T HAVE LET GO OF HER HAND

SOMEONE—
THERE WAS A GIRL ALWAYS SITTING IN A BENCH,
THAT NEVER TALKED TO ANYONE.
SOMEONE GIVE HER GLOVES.
...HER FINGERS ARE SO RED.
CAME TO VISIT ME AT THE BENCH, AND WE STARTED TO TALK
SOON AFTER, THAT OLD MAN...
I GAVE THOSE TO YOU.
CAN I STILL BORROW YOUR GLOVES?
I'M GOING TO MY MOTHER'S PLACE.
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO ACCEPT THINGS FROM STRANGERS.
THAT'S GOOD.

PROMISE?
COME SEE ME.
COME PICK IT UP AT MY HOUSE.
WHEN IT GETS WARMER AND YOU'RE NOT SICK ANYMORE,
..THAT'S RIGHT.
IF ONLY I DIDN'T LET GO OF THAT HAND THAT TIME.
I PROMISE NOT TO LET GO OF IT THIS TIME.
BUT IF THAT SMALL HAND...
IS PUT IN FRONT OF ME AGAIN,
THIS TIME.
EXCUSE ME—
—..THAT OLD MAN—
THE TRAIN'S LEAVING
EXCUSE ME.

—BUT HE TRIED HIS BEST TO FULFILL THAT PROMISE...
NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU WAIT, HE WON'T COME BACK.
... HAD TO GO TO A FARAWAY PLACE
CAN YOU FORGIVE HIM?
YES.


IT'S AN AWKWARD FEELING...
GETTING SENT OFF DIRECTLY AT THE TRAIN PLATFORM.
I SEE.

WHEN IS YOUR FLIGHT?
—UM...

MAYBE BEFORE YOU LEAVE WE COULD—
HUH?
SNIFF
YOUR MOTHER LEFT THIS
YOU'LL PROBABLY SAY IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS AGAIN,
BUT TAKE THIS WITH YOU.
Ah.
PSH
KA-THUNK

A LETTER! OR A PHONE CALL!
WHATEVER IT IS, JUST KEEP IN TOUCH!
CAN YOU HEAR ME, MS. YUKARI!?
MS YUKARI—
JUST ONE MORE TIME...
LET'S GO TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK—
Ka-thunk

...IT'S THIS PHOTO
MOM AND I ARE SMILING IN IT.
WHY DID SHE CHOOSE THIS ONE?
AND—
I ALWAYS REALIZE IT...
WHEN IT'S TOO LATE.

AFTER YOU LOSE IT...
YOU REALIZE HOW HEAVILY YOUR REGRET WEIGHS DOWN ON YOU.
SOMEDAY I WILL.
COME TO PICK YOU UP
DADDY.

JUST ONE MORE TIME.
DADDY.
I WANTED TO SEE HIM.
I'VE...
...ALWAYS WANTED TO FORGIVE HIM.
DADDY!
I WANTED TO FORGIVE MYSELF FOR REMEMBERING HIM.

AND I WILL...
NEVER SEE THIS DREAM AGAIN.
END

H O M E, S W E E T H O M E

Fumetsu no Hana

Where Have All The Flowers Gone